

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

3 City Square-11 Pruyn Street
Albany, New York 12207 (518) 431-1943

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March is flying by, and we've just gotten a foot of snow on the ground. Better now than in April, we hope.

This is the time of big pending events. The scrounging trip to Portsmouth on March 15th, opening day April 1st, moving the ship back to the Albany Snow Dock, and the USS SLATER Former Crewmembers Reunion 19-22 April.

Work continues to progress on the second deck forward. Roy Gunther, DD-711, LSD-17 is spray painting the CPO Quarters and berthing. Tom Moore is continuing insulation repairs on the messdeck and Raf is scaling the forward berthing compartment. The electricians have completed all the white and redlights circuits on the second deck, run all the fan and outlet circuits and are now completing the entertainment system forward. John Mohr, NYC Volunteer & DD-777 Assoc. has sent us 6 complete tapes of music of the '40s so we have every song the ship and its crew ever heard in 1945. Gordon Lattey and Scott McFadden, DD-985, CVN-65 have continued their work in radio central.

Just when we all were feeling those chilling cold days affect our energy, Hack Charbonneau, DE-531, DD-708 to the rescue! He brought in a moose stew that really picked us up and gave us a lift. The only downsider was there was no chocolate mousse for dessert! We've broken out the blue & white checkered tablecloth left by the NYC Volunteers and are enjoying the dignified atmosphere of the Officers' Wardroom until we are demoted back below decks. Hack also has 400 lbs. of moose meat in his freezer and since everyone thought it tasted "better than beef" we're considering moving him from the machine shop into the galley as ships' cook. We have had that position vacant since the venerable Lou Yacullo DE-302, DE-535 hung up his pots & pans down in Manhattan.

When not preparing his moose dish for us, Hack has been making great progress back in the Machine Shop. He fixed the adjustable table on the drill press, mounted a 440 volt bench grinder, loaned us a Lincoln welding machine and is now working on the lathe to try to get that going. His buddy Tom Beeler, DD-878, DD-712 prefers cozier quarters for the winter and has been busy at home making locker tops for the CPO Qtrs. and retrieving his E-mail jokes.

Move day is up in the air. Roy Gunther, Frank Perrella, DE-326 and Tom Moore are working very hard on a closed-cell styrene flotation system for the camels. As you know, our camels were free, and thus old and waterlogged. Camels are commonly described as wooden floats. Ours are described as wooden subs. The plan is to fill their hollow centers with a two-part liquid Styrofoam to give them more buoyancy. The only problem is the pouring of the foam requires temperatures of 70 degrees F. so it may be into April before we can make the pour and

put the camels back in the river to hold us out in deep water. Final plans for the move back to the Albany side of the Hudson are on hold until this work can be accomplished. Thus, we will be opening to the public on the Rensselaer side. No problem, visitors- you will enjoy the short, scenic ride over the Dunn Memorial Bridge and along the river to the winter berth site. There is lots of room for parking and a great view of the Port of Albany as well as the Albany City skyline. Bring your cameras and you will have some great photos of your SLATER visit!

Before greeting our guests, we need all hands to turn to the weekend of March 27 & 28 to get SLATER cleaned up for spring. We would ask you all to report aboard with a bucket, rags, sponge, small shop vac, spray bottle, steel wool and a broom. (Of course you may also bring any other favorite cleaning supplies that work well for you!) We'll be cleaning all the interior spaces, doing a topside washdown, scrubbing bulkhead, and doing interior painting. There is much to do, so we need your help. Spouses and all ladies are especially welcome. You can just imagine what this place looks like after having 20 men working & living together without any female supervision. Give us a call at 431-1943 to let us know you're coming - we'll save a duty station just for you.

This months unsung heroes department includes tour guide Ed Sakacs, DE-191, who has kept our parking lot plowed every time it has snowed, making life a whole lot easier on the rest of us.

Also, thanks to AI Vanderzee, VC-5 who has volunteered to join the midnight emergency response squad. His wife gave her blessing echoing the sentiments of so many wives, "Well, if you're crazy enough to go, I won't stop you..." In AI's case, there is some question about just what experience this Ph.D. in history, former nuclear ordnance man, and our present yeoman can bring that will help us in the face of a swiftly running tide. Someone said it was a shame AI didn't drop out of high school and become a boatswain's mate.

We all were especially pleased to have Ray Lammers, APD-81 and Dutch Hannmann DE-530 back on board after being on sick call. **Ray** does the greatest job of sweeping up after us and is always there to clear the snow from the decks and we had **Dutch's** needle gun waiting for him. (After a dish of **Hack's** moose meat washed down with a cup of SLATER Joe they will be back in top form.)

USS SLATER Crewmember Don Norris has returned from a winter hiatus. **Don** makes the trip from Hollidaysburg, PA and stays in the area to work aboard ship for a few days each month. There wasn't any hesitation when he stepped off the gangway this time - he followed the hammering of the needle guns right to his destination below deck! **Don** has been working very diligently to coordinate his shipmate's Annual Reunion in Albany. And now, he's also helping us complete the restoration so they can see the progress aboard SLATER. He is certainly getting into some areas of the ship he didn't see when he served aboard her as an R 3/c in 1945!

And, finally the woman who almost single-handedly pulled the SLATER through the winter is Annette Beauchaine. She has been making and selling dogtags at Crossgates Mall on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. With husband **Les, DE-509** by her side, (when he hasn't been needle gunning on the ship), she has been keeping us afloat. Aside from the contributions we receive, this has been our sole source of income since January. Our thanks go out to her and **Les** for the time they have put in.

If you're ready to get back on board we need all the help we can get this month. It is going to be a steady push to get the second deck forward ready for visitor's. We have a lot of painting and cleaning to do before opening day.

Maintenance days continue to be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday from 9 to 4. Cleaners are welcome ANY TIME!

NOTES FROM NANCY: I have really appreciated all the help at Crossgates Mall. While the **Beauchaine's** were cranking out the dogtags, several volunteers were on the upper level by the WW II Jeep exhibit and the dioramas visiting with shoppers and answering questions about the SLATER. Thanks to **Pat & Betty Cancilla, DE-441**, and other CAPDESA members; **Bob Donlon, DE- 419, Hank Rizzo, DE-158, APD-54** and **Karl Brittell, DE-253** for informing the public about the SLATER project.

Soon we will welcome back all Tour Guides, Dock Volunteers and Visitor Service Assistants for another season. Ideally each of you will have a set schedule of 2 to 4 days a month when you will be able to work. This year we will be hosting a good number of ship-reunions and school tours so it will be very important that you call me, as the schedule will have to be prepared for the entire month. If you can't guarantee a certain time that you will be available, call me and we can discuss your options. We will be open each Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 4 PM; beginning April 1st, so brush off those peacoats and shine those shoes we need your help!!

I have also received much help from **Dick and Maralyn Walker, USCG (SKI)**. They have been very patiently contacting people from the volunteer lists to reconfirm addresses and phone #'s. **Maralyn** has been assisting with the Ship's Store at Crossgates Mall and those sales have also helped to keep us afloat.

A special volunteer mustering is planned for the first Sunday after opening, April 4th, aboard SLATER. It will be our usual casual gathering and everyone attending may bring a dish of their choice to share. I will be coordinating this further as the month progresses so save that date. We want to get the season off to an atmosphere of comradeship among all the staff and volunteers. There are lots of new faces and it will be a great chance to get the crew together in one location for roll call.

A publicity project is being planned by Joanne McFadden and Pat Perrella. They are hoping to prepare articles about our volunteers and send them for publication in the National Newsletters of the various Veterans Organizations. But, we need your help with this project. If you belong to a Veterans Organization such as the *American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Catholic War Vets* or any others, please leave a copy of your newsletter at the ship. We will then track you down for more info, get a photo of you working aboard ship (if we don't already have one) and submit an article for these newsletters. **WE WANT THE WORLD TO LEARN ABOUT THE USS SLATER** and the work all you VETERAN volunteers are doing so give us your info on your Veterans Group affiliations and we will get the project underway!

By the time the April issue comes out we will be able to report on opening day, the scrounging trip to Portsmouth and firm up our moving day. Until then we hope to see you aboard.